

Governor's Advisory Council For Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) Annual Report 2011-2012



Cover art by Julia Murphy, daughter of GACEC Member Annalisa Ekbladh

Submitted by:

Terri A. Hancharick, GACEC Chairperson

Wendy Strauss, GACEC Executive Director

Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
516 West Loockerman Street, Dover, DE 19904
Phone: (302) 739-4553, Fax: (302) 739-6126

MISSION STATEMENT

The Council's mission is to provide leadership through advice and advocacy for the unmet needs of citizens of all ages who are exceptional, in order to improve their lives.*

- * The term "exceptional citizens" refers to persons of all ages who have special needs. It should be noted that the GACEC state mandate for exceptional citizens includes children with special gifts and talents.

What is the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens?

Statutory Responsibilities

In accordance with CFR 300.650 (b), the Council serves as the State Advisory Panel for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its amendments.

1. Delaware Code: Title 14, Chapter 31, Sub. Sec. 3111
2. Federal Statute: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its amendments

The State Advisory Panel will:

- (1) "...advise(s) the state educational agency of unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities;
- (2) comment(s) publicly on any rules or regulations proposed for issuance by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities and the procedures for distribution of funds under this part; and
- (3) assist(s) the state in developing and reporting such data and evaluations as may assist the Secretary under Section 618..."

Historical Background and Performance Measures

The GACEC initially served as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) advisory panel, monitoring services and making recommendations on behalf of students to the Governor, General Assembly, Secretary of Education, and the State Board of Education. However, the State of Delaware increased the role of the Council in the state to include advising and advocating on the unmet service needs of all citizens with exceptionalities in Delaware from birth to death.

The Council provides no direct services to clients, so we track the number of advisory communications and recommendations through letters and personal contacts as one of our Performance Measures, along with the outcome of our correspondence. Council sent out over 5,700 letters to the Delaware General Assembly, Department of Education (DOE), Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and other agencies in the past year, and assisted these agencies with their understanding of the implications of regulatory and legislative changes impacting the lives of persons with disabilities. Council began to submit our letters via e-mail to cut costs. We feel that we are still in a transitional period and have yet to determine if this new procedure is working. We hope that our e-mailed messages will be opened and read just as if they were hard copy letters.

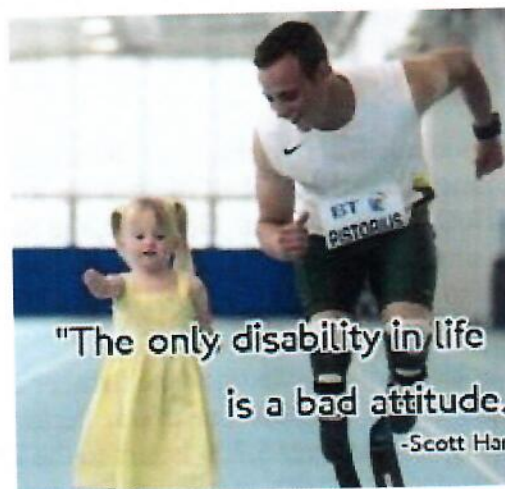
Another one of the Performance Measures shows that Council members and staff participate on over sixty councils, boards or committees, such as the DOE Access to General Education Curriculum (AGEC), Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), and the Delaware Coalition for Americans with Disabilities (DCADA), to name a few. Involvement on the various committees or task forces and collaborations with other councils assists the GACEC in its ability to advise and

advocate for systemic changes. Since its inception, Council realized that it cannot operate effectively in a silo. Council prides itself on its advocacy and ability to collaborate. This year, as in past years, Council has worked with individuals in the private sector to assist us with some projects. Also, Council is able to assist in the design of programs, community services and supports for persons with exceptionalities through participation with other groups.

Council educates the general public and disability community regarding disability issues and services related to children, youth and adults. Increased education on disability related issues will lead to improvements in inclusion, productivity and equality for persons with disabilities. People cannot care about what they do not know about or do not understand. Council advises and provides recommendations for systemic change activities that allow individuals with disabilities and their families to have input into the design of and provision of needed community services. This may include individualized supports and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence and productivity through culturally competent programs.

Our third Performance Measure tracks persons contacted via outreach and awareness activities. Council reached over 13,000 persons at conferences, workshops and electronically. The information that was provided included details about the GACEC and disability issues. The GACEC website continues to provide information on Council activities and other items of importance to the disability community.

During these times of economic hardship, the GACEC strives to continue our advocacy more than ever to enhance the lives of persons with disabilities. To assist with that effort, Council will continue to provide advice, monitor programs and comment on regulations and legislation to ensure that special education plans are being implemented successfully and the needs of children with exceptionalities in Delaware are being met. The GACEC will continue to provide recommendations to agencies that work with children transitioning into adult services to ensure that they are given the opportunity to become successful and productive members of society.



Message from the Chair

This is my second year as chair of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC). I am honored to be working with a committed group of people who volunteer their time to make the world better for people with disabilities. You touch my heart even more personally as the parent of an adult child with disabilities and I thank you! Our mission statement is to provide leadership through advice and advocacy for the unmet needs of citizens of all ages who are exceptional, in order to improve their lives. I am proud to say that I see each and every one of you making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities in the state of Delaware every day. I would like to welcome new members and thank members who are no longer serving on the Council. Joining us this year is Marie-Anne Aghazadian of the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware. We were sad to say farewell to Mila Wells, also of the Parent Information Center of Delaware.

We have worked collaboratively with MaryAnn Mieczkowski and her staff on issues affecting the education of students with exceptionalities. The GACEC has taken the lead on Senate Bill No. 242. Senate Bill No. 242 addresses the lack of standards and the misuse of seclusion and restraint in our schools. It will help to keep our kids safer as they learn, develop and participate in instructional programs that promote academic achievement. The GACEC along with the other councils have spent many hours at Legislative Hall educating our state leaders. Students and adults in schools, community or institutional settings have died from the use of restraint and seclusion. Often, these deaths result from the misuse or overuse of restraint and seclusion techniques. We were unsuccessful in our attempts to have something put into legislation this year. This will be a top priority for the GACEC in the new legislative year.

On June 27, 2012, the Delaware Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) No. 34, establishing the State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs. The State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs is an initiative established by the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC), the University of Delaware (UD) Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS), and the Catalyst Center, Boston University School of Public Health. The Task Force will study the transitional needs of young adults with disabilities and special health care needs. The Task Force's main goal is to develop strategies to ensure successful transition from the educational system into adult services.



Left to right, Senator Bethany Hall-Long, Self-Advocate Brigitte Hancharick and GACEC Chair Terri Hancharick enjoy the Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest Awards Luncheon on December 1, 2011.

For the third year the GACEC celebrated Disability History and Awareness Month in the month of October. As they did last year GACEC staff prepared resource manuals, newsletters and spread the word about our Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest to schools statewide. Three students from each age group were chosen as the top prize winners and were given certificates as well as cash awards provided by the Boardwalk Buddy Walk Organization. The winning students, along with their parents and teachers, were honored at an awards luncheon held on December 1, 2011 at George V. Massey Station. Joining the students were Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn, Secretary of Education Lillian Lowery, Senator Bethany Hall-Long and MaryAnn Mieczkowski, Director of Exceptional Children Resources, DOE.

As part of our mission to improve the lives of people with exceptionalities in Delaware, GACEC staff person Kristin Mullen came up with the idea of Project Hug. Project Hug's goal is to provide warmth, comfort, hugs and smiles for children and young adults in Delaware who are homeless or in foster care. Donations of "hugs" (to include new or newly made coats, blankets, scarves, gloves, fleece items, and more) poured in from the generous citizens of Delaware. On February 15, 2011, the GACEC and Project Hug partner organization the Organization of Adult Alumni and Students in Service (OAASIS) hosted a reception in the lobby at Massey Station, where "Hug Ambassadors" (social workers, school nurses, foster care coordinators) were free to pick from the thousands of donated items. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss did all the baking, while OAASIS workers donated food for the guests as well. Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn and Mrs. Delaware Siouxzan Moore were among the honored guests.



Pictured are a mere few of the thousands of items donated for Project Hug. This initiative was a collaboration of the GACEC and OAASIS focused on providing brand-new, warm, "practical, portable, positive hugs" for children in Delaware who are homeless or in foster care. The items were presented to their "hug ambassadors" to begin their journey to their new owners at a reception held on February 15, 2011.

We should all be very proud of what we have accomplished in a year's time. I am looking forward to another year of lively discussion, challenges and fresh ideas with a few laughs thrown in.

Respectfully,
Terri Hancharick
 Chairperson



GACEC Chairperson Terri Hancharick celebrates being awarded the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) "Custie" Award with her family at the Dover Sheraton Hotel.

Organizational Structure

The GACEC is an all-volunteer Council with a membership composition representing a broad cross-section of Delaware's statewide community. The GACEC holds regularly scheduled monthly meetings at the George V. Massey Station in Dover, unless otherwise noted. These meetings are open to the public with meeting notifications published in several newspapers and on the State of Delaware calendar of events. Officers are elected annually, with the elected chairperson responsible for providing the Council its primary leadership. The Chairperson also oversees the GACEC support staff. The Executive Board consists of the Chairperson of the Council, Vice-Chairperson of the Council, Chairperson-Elect, Past Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer and Committee Chairpersons. The Council developed and is guided by its By-Laws and a Code of Ethics to effectively discharge its diverse responsibilities. The GACEC is comprised of two administrative committees: Membership and Personnel. The GACEC also has four issues committees: Infant/Early Childhood, Children and Youth, Adult/Transition Services and Policy and Law.

The four standing issues committees do most of the actual work of the Council. The Infant and Early Childhood Committee is concerned with issues surrounding the identification and initial services for children from birth through age five. The Children and Youth Committee looks into specific issues related to the school age children of our community. The Adult Transition Services Committee monitors and works on issues such as housing and vocational opportunities for individuals who are moving into adulthood. The Policy and Law Committee reviews proposed regulations and legislation in order to comment on how persons with exceptionalities in our state will be affected. The two administrative committees handle personnel issues, membership monitoring and recruitment for the Council. Ad-hoc committees are created as needed. This framework has served the GACEC well.

2011-2012 Highlights

The GACEC held its Annual Fall Retreat on September 9 and 10, 2011 at the Virden Center in Lewes, Delaware, as part of the Council's planning activities for FY 2012. Retreat participants included GACEC members and staff, Mary Ann Mieczkowski and Brian Touchette of the Delaware Department of Education, and Roger Levy, husband of GACEC member Danna Levy. Jill Ripley of the GACEC Kids on the Block Program and GACEC staff member Kristin Mullen performed a skit for the members. Self-Advocate Sonal Cercena gave a presentation on "A Spoonful of Inspiration". Ray, Lori, Jacob, Jenna and Zoe Verlinghieri shared their family's story with a presentation on "Life Without Limits".

Justin Ryan of the State of Delaware served as the facilitator for the 2011 Retreat. Justin assisted Council with its mission statement and the development of Council goals for FY 2012. Justin began his discussion with a review of the agenda for the day from his PowerPoint presentation. He discussed the charter of the GACEC which is the State mandate. The charter states that the Council is responsible for advising on the unmet human service needs of exceptional citizens of all ages and to also act as the IDEA advisory panel for the State of Delaware.

Justin facilitated Council discussion on setting measurable, attainable goals and prioritizing activities.

GACEC COUNCIL GOALS FOR 2011-2012

"Far and away, the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." ~ Theodore Roosevelt

GOAL 1: Outcomes for students with exceptionalities will be improved by monitoring and supporting the implementation of the Annual Performance Report (APR), State Professional Development Grant (SPDG), No Child Left Behind (NCLB) as the NCLB pertains to students with exceptionalities and review of the Department of Education (DOE) Special Education Regulations.

Activities for this year could include:

1. Ensure compliance of IDEA objectives by monitoring and reporting on results of:
 - Annual Performance Report
 - State Professional Development Grant
 - No Child Left Behind
 - DOE Special Education Regulations
 - DOE Focused Monitoring reports for all districts and charter schools
 - Overall DOE enforcement and district compliance of State and Federal requirements.
2. Work with DOE when a district non-compliance issue arises until it is resolved.
3. Advocate for professional development for teachers and specialists in the area of students with exceptionalities.
4. Advocate for service personnel at the appropriate levels with the appropriate qualifications.
5. Monitor progress of the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative.

GOAL 2: Programs and services for students with exceptionalities will be improved by monitoring and advocating for the delivery of special education and related services in the least restrictive and natural environments.

Activities for this year could include:

1. Review and comment on proposed Delaware Code changes for needs-based funding program. Comments will be sent to the Department of Education (DOE), Controller General's Office and the Office of Management and Budget.
2. Review and comment on Medicaid funding, including programs and system for processing requests for all individuals with special needs. Comments will be sent to the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) and Medicaid Representatives.
3. Review and comment on proposed Department of Education regulatory changes. Comments will be sent to DOE, State Board of Education and Professional Standards Board for discussion at State Board of Education meetings.
4. Monitor expenditures of Race to the Top funding at State and District level –monitor progress and report concerns to DOE.
5. Advocate, as needed, for increased and appropriate early transition process in all school systems.
6. Research statewide programs for gifted and talented students and begin to advocate for a statewide program.
7. Advocate to ensure that services will be available in all settings where implementable.
8. Encourage and educate school districts on activities in connection with Disability History and Awareness Month, to include the Kids on the Block puppet program.

9. Foster collaboration among agencies that address special education in the State of Delaware.
10. Assist with activities of the Advisory Committee on Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss to encourage collaboration and ensure continuum of services is available for students with hearing loss.

GOAL 3: Programs and services for citizens with exceptionalities will be improved by reviewing and advocating for funding, policies, procedures and best practices that positively impact and empower citizens with exceptionalities.

Activities for this year could include:

1. Identify, review and provide comments on memoranda of understanding, inter-agency agreements, legislation and regulations. Send comments to the lead agency in the memoranda with copies to the other agencies involved.
2. Track and report on the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) statistics and address any issues that are found.
3. Advocate for the removal of barriers to access in public areas, as needed. Advocate for increased signage describing available services in public areas.
4. Advocate for programs that enable individuals with exceptionalities to live independently and become active citizens in their community.
5. Foster partnerships with other agencies and councils to promote rights and quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities.
6. Advocate for DOE Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, and deaf/hard of hearing training and materials for teachers.
7. Monitor district use of assistive technology and professional development.

GOAL 4: The GACEC will impact legislators, agencies, councils and other entities through more effective communication strategies.

Activities for this year could include:

1. Continue current modes of communication (letters, outside committee involvement, etc.).
2. Encourage each Council member to contact at least one legislator during the year on a Council concern.
3. Provide training for GACEC members on how to discuss issues with state legislators and on the GACEC Code of Ethics.
4. Increase partnerships with other agencies and councils, such as Vision 2015, that are involved in promoting rights and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.
5. Encourage diversity of participants in GACEC meetings, membership and activities.
6. Encourage collaborative efforts between committees, particularly in working with the Policy and Law committee on issues of particular interest to individual committees.
7. Each Council member will contact their legislator each year to introduce themselves and the GACEC.

GOAL 5: Delaware Department of Education standards-based reform and accountability efforts will be reviewed in order to provide advice and advocacy for the inclusion of students with exceptionalities in all programs and initiatives.

Activities for this year could include:

1. Review and comment on any changes to statewide accountability system as it relates to children with exceptionalities.
2. Participate on Department of Education committees and workgroups in order to provide input on issues impacting students with exceptionalities.

The following is a list of GACEC collaborative efforts with other organizations and agencies to promote education and awareness:

- The GACEC **wrote more than 90 letters** to the Governor, Legislators, the Department of Education and other agencies advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families.

- **Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) Summit, 2011: "Summit 2.0 Real Jobs--It's Everyone's Business"** was held from November 17 to 19, 2011 in National Harbor, Washington, DC. Plenary sessions featured local, state and national leaders exploring new ways of thinking about employment and providing new insights and inspiration on how to achieve the goal of doubling integrated employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by the year 2015. Breakout topics provided information on implementing best practices, leading systems change, understanding innovations, and working with employers and communities. The Breakout Sessions provided opportunities for questions and conversation and featured the perspectives of self-advocates, employers, policy leaders, researchers and service providers. GACEC staff was proud to be a part of the Delaware State Team (pictured at right) which included self-advocates, parent advocates, representatives from the Department of Labor (DOL), the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC).



- **Employment First**-GACEC staff and GACEC Chairperson Terri Hancharick joined the DDC and others to design an Employment Action Plan for Delaware. This action plan holds many goals and activities, and resulted in the Employment First legislation (HB 319) which was passed in June of 2012.
- **LIFE Conference Design Team**- The annual LIFE Conference seeks to assure that persons with disabilities in Delaware have full access to supportive Legislation, Independence, Family support services and Education. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss is a member of the LIFE Conference Design Team. The team is also comprised of representatives from DDC, SCPD, the Seer Group, Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS), Delaware Public Health (DPH), Easter Seals, the Division of Medicaid and Medicare Assistance (DMMA), DOE and the Delaware Coalition for the Americans with Disabilities Act (DCADA).
- The annual **LIFE Conference** on January 19, 2012 was attended by over **400** people. **LIFE** stands for **L**egislation, **I**ndependence, **F**amily and **E**ducation. This is the largest conference focusing on disabilities in Delaware.

- **Disability Awareness Legislative Event** –On April 9, 2012, participants spent the afternoon at Legislative Hall speaking with their legislators on policy issues, such as ensuring that school districts throughout Delaware have qualified Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) and other educational professionals. Over **200** individuals received information on disability related issues at Legislative Hall after the informative training session.
- The GACEC is a member of the **Universal Design Coalition**, created by the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC). The Universal Design Coalition encourages the State of Delaware and builders to incorporate “universal design” standards. Universal design standards attempt to incorporate home designs that will facilitate allowing individuals to age in their own homes, and also be accessible for persons with disabilities. The idea is to make more housing available to more people at little or no extra cost. The GACEC endorsed **HS 1 to HB 227**, which requires that all newly constructed dwelling units using public financial assistance be built using universal design standards. This bill was passed by the Legislature in June of 2012.
- GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss is a member of the **SCPD Policy and Law Committee**. This committee reviewed and/or provided comment on **more than 130** proposed or final regulations, State bills, Federal bills and many other policies which impact persons with disabilities.
- **SCPD Brain Injury Committee (BIC)** - GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss is a member of the SCPD Brain Injury Committee (BIC). BIC’s mission is to improve the lives of Delawareans with brain injury by providing the following: 1) a forum for the sharing and analysis of information; 2) a network to identify and facilitate acquisition of enhanced resources; 3) a technical assistance provider to educate public and private policymakers; and 4) an advocacy agency to promote a consumer oriented, effective injury and prevention service delivery system.
- **GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss**- This committee served as the advisory panel for Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind when they were beginning to develop their Auditory Verbal Program and preschool classroom. The GACEC formed this committee to address the needs of students who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or deaf blind. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss served as the Chairperson of this committee. In addition to the GACEC and Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind, the committee also included representatives from the Choices Group, DOE, Child Development Watch (CDW), SCPD, Delaware Hands and Voices (DHV), the Center on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality (CODHHE) and A.I. DuPont/Nemours. The committee was rounded out by parent representatives, the Vice-Superintendent of the Christina School District (which houses the Delaware School for the Deaf) and an itinerant teacher of the Deaf. This committee held their final meeting in November of 2011. Mary Ann Mieczkowski of DOE has now formed a new advisory committee entitled the Delaware Preschool Group which carries on the work begun by the GACEC.
- **Statewide Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs**-GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss and GACEC Chairperson Terri Hancharick took the lead on forming this task force following a request from Council’s Adult/Transition Services Committee in 2011. The Delaware Legislature passed Senate

Concurrent Resolution (SCR) No. 34, establishing the State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs and its related work groups. The Task Force will study the transitional needs of youth and young adults with disabilities and special health care needs. The Task Force's main goal is to develop strategies to ensure successful transition from school age to adult services.

Within the Task Force, there are four work groups, each focusing on a specific area of concern. The Work Groups will address concerns and issues within the following areas: Education, Employment, Health and Housing/Transportation. The Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs is pleased to count self-advocates and parent advocates from each of Delaware's three counties among its members.

Organizational partners include A.I. DuPont/ Nemours Hospital for Children, The Catalyst Center of Boston University, Christiana Care, Delaware's Centers for Independent Living (CIL), the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), the Delaware House of Representatives, Delaware Department of Education (DOE), Delaware Family Voices (DFV), Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Delaware Department of Labor (DOL), Delaware Department of Public Health (DPH), the Delaware Senate, the Disabilities Law Program (DLP), the Division of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF), the Governor's Commission on Building Access to Community Based Services, the Office of the Insurance Commissioner of Delaware, the Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC) and the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD). The State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs also looks forward to working with Secretary of Health and Social Services Rita Landgraf on prioritizing concerns and helping to determine solutions.

- **Needs Based Funding Ad Hoc Committee-** This committee was formed by the GACEC to assist with writing regulations to implement Needs Based Funding in all Delaware schools. The committee's intent was to ensure fair distribution of funding for children with disabilities in Delaware. Joining the GACEC at the table were representatives from DOE, Autism Delaware, Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind/Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD), Delaware Autism Program (DAP), Parent Information Center (PIC), Disabilities Law Program (DLP), Special Education Leadership, DDC, SCPD and many community members. The committee submitted their final comments and recommendations on January 4, 2011. The resulting legislation was the first bill of the January-June Legislative Session...House Bill (HB) 1. Governor Jack Markell signed HB 1 on February 17, 2011. Council continues to work with the DOE on monitoring requirements.

- **House Bill 123**-This bill followed on the heels of House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 19, which recognizes the month of October as Disability History and Awareness Month in Delaware. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss approached Representative Quinton Johnson and Senator Bethany Hall-Long about converting the HCR to a Bill. The signing of House Bill 123 into law on August 17, 2011 was a proud day for the GACEC.



Governor Jack Markell signs HB 123 into law at the Can-Do Playground.

- **GACEC Kids on the Block Program-**

GACEC's Kids on the Block (KOTB) program has continued to flourish during 2012. The program has currently held over 20 puppet shows throughout the state. The "kids" have made appearances at the 2011 Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk Buddy Walk, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Delaware's Bounce Party, 2012 LIFE Conference, 2012 Autism Walk, Old Dover Days, DFRC Blue Gold Game and the Delaware State Fair in Harrington. In total the program has reached an estimated 2,000 individuals both with and without disabilities. Repeat performances have been done at Selbyville Library and a few others are scheduled in the fall. Although our program is geared toward school aged children, the show does not stop because it is summer break! KOTB have performed in several daycare centers and summer camp programs. We are thankful to our sponsors whose funding is crucial to the program, Delaware Department of Education, Boardwalk Buddy Walk organization, and the Delaware Foundation Reaching Citizens with Intellectual disABILITIES (DFRC).



Representatives from the GACEC Kids on the Block Program were proud to participate in the 2012 DFRC Blue Gold All-Star Football Game. Left to right: Kristin Mullen, Brenda Dubrowski, Sarah White, Ellen Jane Pearson, Sybil White and Wendy Strauss.

Volunteer support is crucial to the success of our program, and though we have the support of a small group of wonderful volunteers, we continue to seek additional volunteers. KOTB has visited several senior centers, including the Modern Maturity Center in Dover, to recruit puppeteers. We have also reached out to several large churches in the area and have listings on both the United Way website and Volunteer Delaware.

Going forward, KOTB is looking to expand into the early childhood arena. Plans are currently underway to establish a program aimed specifically toward children in the preschool setting ages two to five. The early childhood program will not only cover disability awareness, but will touch on social topics like healthy eating and good citizenship. We have recently received funding from the Delaware Department of Education to begin implementing the program starting in the fall of 2012.

- Delaware Foundation Reaching Citizens with DisABILITIES (DFRC)**-In 2011, GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss reached out to Tony Glenn of the DFRC regarding a possible grant opportunity for the GACEC Kids on the Block Program. Tony also put Wendy in touch with Coleen Popp, who oversees the DFRC Disability Awareness Program in Delaware schools. This unique program uses a variety of interactive, age-appropriate activities to enhance understanding and promote inclusion of kids with disabilities. The GACEC Kids on the Block Program is pleased to report terrific progress with the DFRC's Disability Awareness Program, presenting puppet shows in schools that are interested in hosting a program. GACEC Kids on the Block Program representatives including Statewide Coordinator Sybil White, GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss, Puppeteer Sarah White, Volunteer Helpers Randy and Nick White and GACEC Administrative Coordinator Kristin Mullen were proud to represent the GACEC Kids on the Block Program at the 2012 DFRC Blue-Gold All-Star Football Game Parade on June 23, 2012 at the University of Delaware. We look forward to continuing to work with the DFRC in the future.

- Boardwalk Buddy Walk Organization**- The Boardwalk Buddy Walk Organization is a key supporter of the GACEC Kids on the Block Program. The GACEC Kids on the Block Program presented a show at the 2011 Boardwalk Buddy Walk in Rehoboth Beach, which was attended by more than 500 people. GACEC staff also participated in the Boardwalk Buddy Walk itself. The GACEC is grateful for the support that the Boardwalk Buddy Walk Organization has provided our Kids on the Block Program, and we look forward to our continued partnership.



The Boardwalk Buddy Walk was held on Saturday, October 8, 2011 and was attended by over 500 participants. The GACEC Kids on the Block Program performed for all assembled, and GACEC staff participated in the walk.

- DOE Special Education Leadership Work Group**-GACEC staff attend these statewide meetings to monitor what is happening with special education in Delaware, as well as to provide input.
- Transition to Adult Life Fair**-GACEC staff attended the Transition to Adult Life Fair held by Christina School District on October 19, 2011. Staff provided information on the GACEC and how Council seeks to provide advice and advocacy for persons with disabilities for their full lifespan in Delaware. Brochures and other information from the Delaware Coalition for Americans with Disabilities Act (DCADA) and Camp Lenape were shared. Information on the GACEC Kids on the Block Program was also distributed at the fair.
- Coordinating Council for Children with Disabilities (CCCD)**-GACEC staff members are members of the CCCD, and attend meetings to keep abreast of issues facing children with disabilities and to provide input. Other members of the CCCD include representatives from the DDC, Delaware Aspergers Support Group, A.I. DuPont/Nemours, Bayada Nurses, PIC and Easter Seals. This year, the GACEC and the GACEC Kids on the Block Program were pleased partner with the CCCD and the Delaware State Fair to be present all day on July 24, 2012 for

Healthy Kids Day. GACEC materials were distributed at the CCCD table, and representatives from the GACEC staff conducted activities with the children. The GACEC Kids on the Block Program also performed a puppet show.

- **Dover Air Force Base Exceptional Families Resources Program-**GACEC staff have attended two information fairs held on Dover Air Force Base by their Exceptional Families Resources Program. Information about the GACEC and our mission was shared, as well as information on the GACEC Kids on the Block Program. The GACEC Kids on the Block Program was also pleased to book a show through the Dover Air Force Base Exceptional Families Resources Program, which took place at the Dover Air Force Base Youth Center in November, 2011.
- **Electro Convulsive Shock Therapy (ECT) Review Group-**Pat Maichle of the DDC pointed out that currently, there are no regulations regarding the use of electro convulsive shock therapy in Delaware. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss joined representatives from the Disabilities Law Program (DLP), DDC and SCPD to explore possible regulatory initiatives regarding the use of this therapy. The group continues to meet to discuss these issues.
- **Restraints and Seclusion Ad-Hoc Committee-** This committee reviewed several national reports which indicated that seclusion and restraints are highly dangerous interventions which have led to death, injury and trauma in children. The committee also reviewed other state's laws and regulations. The committee, other councils, legislators, and council staff worked tirelessly on HB 242.
- **University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies' Improving the Health of People with Disabilities through State-Based Public Health Programs-** (Formerly the Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities Program) The Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities Program's mission was to improve the health status of people with disabilities in Delaware. The project was a five-year (2007-2012) cooperative agreement between the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) at the University of Delaware (UD). GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss was a member of the work group for the Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities Program and will continue as the group transitions to the Improving the Health of People with Disabilities Through State-Based Public Health Programs Group. Wendy will attend meetings, provide and receive input and ensure that the GACEC continues to work collaboratively as the Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities Program transitions to the Improving the Health of People with Disabilities Through State-Based Public Health Programs Group.

- **Delaware Education Support System (DESS) Advisory Council-** The DESS Advisory Council serves as the core stakeholder group charged with guiding the enhancement and implementation of the Delaware Education Support System, including improvements to the Education Success Planning and Evaluation System. The council also provides guidance on Title I implementation by State Education Agency (SEA). GACEC Chair Terri Hancharick is a member of the advisory council representing a parent's perspective. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss also attends meetings as necessary. The DESS Advisory Council includes representatives from the Governor's office, Delaware school districts, DOE and parents.
- **Delaware Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC) Education Work Group-** The commission focuses on the rights of foster children. CPAC also seeks to ensure that Delaware schools fulfill their responsibilities regarding the education of foster children. This includes children who need special education and the Educational Surrogate Parent (ESP) Program. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss is a member of the Delaware CPAC Education Work Group, and attends meetings to provide input and receive information.
- **Delaware Coalition for the Americans with Disabilities Act (DCADA)-GACEC** Secretary/Treasurer Carma Carpenter serves as the Chairperson for DCADA. The coalition strives to ensure that all areas of the Americans with Disabilities Act are being properly addressed. GACEC staff attends these meetings.
- **Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (ICC)-**The ICC focuses on early childhood issues. Wendy Strauss and other members of Council are members and attend meetings to provide information and keep up to date on new information regarding early childhood issues.
- **Access to General Education Curriculum (AGEC) Work Group-** This group focuses on assessment issues for students in special education. GACEC Office Manager Kathie Cherry attends these meetings to provide input from her perspective as a parent, as well as a representative of the Council.
- **State Board of Education-**GACEC staff regularly attends the monthly State Board of Education meetings to monitor the progress of Race to the Top, DCAS, Needs Based Funding, and other important regulatory initiatives which affect the lives of children with disabilities in Delaware.

- **Adapted Physical Education Ad-Hoc Committee (APE)** - Convened in 2011, the APE is an initiative of the GACEC. It was established to identify gaps in physical education accessibility for students with disabilities and consider possible solutions to help bridge these gaps. Joining the GACEC at the table are parent advocates, representatives from the University of Delaware (UD), the UD Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS), the Delaware Department of Education (DOE), Special Olympics Delaware, Rec 4 All and more. A survey was drafted by the committee and distributed to all Delaware physical education teachers. The ad-hoc committee will re-convene in the fall of 2012 to review the survey results and determine what steps should be taken.
- **Family Leadership Advisory Council (FLAC)** - This Council was established by Delaware Family Voices to address the unmet service needs of persons with disabilities and to provide guidance and resources to their families or caregivers. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss regularly attends FLAC meetings to share and obtain information.
- **Transition and Post-Secondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)** - The University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) has been awarded a \$2.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to create comprehensive, inclusive and customized postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities. The Transitions and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) demonstration grant provides funding over five years (2010-2015).

The grant addresses the statewide need for postsecondary educational options for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Programs will serve those who desire more than a high school certificate or diploma and require additional services and supports to succeed in furthering their education. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss regularly attends TPSID meetings to share and obtain information.

- **CDS Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities (EPID)** - The EPID initiative focuses on expanding family-centered and inclusive emergency planning and preparedness in Delaware. The emphasis is on family involvement, preparedness of individuals with disabilities and training for emergency planners and responders. Funded by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, activities center around enabling individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to prepare for emergency situations and promoting the seamless integration of emergency planning for individuals with developmental disabilities into existing emergency operational plans in Delaware. GACEC staff regularly attend meetings of the CDS Disaster Preparedness Committee, to share and obtain information.

- **Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Mega Conference-** GACEC Chairperson Terri Hancharick and GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss attended the 2011 OSEP



Terri Hancharick, GACEC Chairperson; Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability and Education Policy Analyst, Legislative Office, Washington, DC; Marie-Anne Aghazadian, Executive Director, PIC of Delaware and Wendy Strauss, GACEC Executive Director visited Capitol Hill during their time at the 2011 OSEP Mega Conference.

Mega Conference from August 1 to August 3, 2011 in Virginia. The theme of the 2011 Conference was “Cross Cutting Collaboration to Achieve Success: Cradle to Career”. Presentation topics included “Coordinated Funding for Preschool Inclusion”, “Social Determinants of Health and Eligibility

Determination: What is the Impact on Programs?” and “The Intersection of Health and Education: Children with Special Healthcare Needs in Schools”.

- **Project Hug-** This initiative of the GACEC and the Organization of Adult Alumni and Students in Service (OAASIS) began in the fall of 2011 with the goal of collecting new, warm, cuddly items for children who are homeless or in foster care in Delaware. At a reception held at Massey Station on February 15, 2012 the GACEC and OAASIS were proud to distribute thousands of “practical, portable, positive hugs” in the form of coats, blankets, scarves, cuddly animals, hand made quilts, afghans, pajamas, slippers and more to the assembled Hug Ambassadors. These Hug Ambassadors included social workers, school nurses, foster care coordinators and representatives from DSCYF. Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn provided the welcoming remarks.
- **Disability History and Awareness Month Activities-** 2011 marked the third year for the GACEC’s Disability History and Awareness Month efforts and activities.

Background: In 2009, GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss approached Senator Bethany Hall-Long and Representative Quinton Johnson about recognizing the month of October as Disability History and Awareness Month in Delaware. The result was House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 19. In 2010, Wendy again approached Sen. Hall-Long and Rep. Johnson about the possibility of upgrading the legislation to a bill. The result was House Bill (HB) 123, which Governor Markell signed into law on August 17, 2011.



The 2011 GACEC Disability History and Awareness Month Display in the Cabinet Room at the Delaware Department of Education.

The GACEC is dedicated to promoting Disability History and Awareness Month in Delaware through the following activities:

- ❖ **Disability History and Awareness Month Resource Manuals:** GACEC Office Manager Kathie Cherry and student intern Sybil White compiled resource manuals for every school and charter school in Delaware. The manuals included information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, the Help America Vote Act of 2002, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The manual also included information regarding disability etiquette, examples of People First Language, activities to help promote disability awareness and inclusion in the classroom and a sample letter to notify parents of upcoming Disability History and Awareness activities. A PDF file of the resource manual is available on the GACEC website at:

<http://gacec.delaware.gov/DHAM2011/DisabilityHistoryandAwarenessMonthResource%20Guide09.pdf>
- ❖ **Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest-** The GACEC was pleased to coordinate their third annual Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest. A request was sent out to all school districts to have their students create posters about Disability Awareness. Entries poured in from throughout the state, culminating in three winners from each category: Elementary School, Middle School and High School.
- ❖ **Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest Awards Luncheon-** On December 1, 2011, the winners of the GACEC's Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest were honored at the second annual Awards Luncheon, which was held at George V. Massey Station. The winning students were joined by their families, as well as Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn, Secretary of Education Lillian Lowery, Senator Bethany Hall-Long and Director of Resources for Exceptional Children Mary Ann Mieczkowski. The students were treated to lunch with the Honorable guests, and were each given an award certificate and a monetary prize donated by the Boardwalk Buddy Walk Organization.
- ❖ **Disability History and Awareness Month Display at DOE-** Artwork from the 2010 Disability History and Awareness Month Poster Contest was on display in the Cabinet Room at the Delaware Department of Education during October of 2011. Poster contest entries were used to decorate the large bulletin board to promote the fact that October is Disability History and Awareness Month in Delaware.
- ❖ **Disability History and Awareness Month Video-** GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss has long held a goal to produce and distribute a video regarding Disability History and Awareness to all Delaware school districts and charter schools. Wendy reached out to numerous individuals in the community and asked them to share their stories of overcoming obstacles. Thanks to this outreach the video will feature the stories of individuals with disabilities including Down Syndrome, Deafness, Cerebral Palsy, Autism and Juvenile Diabetes. Individuals will also share their stories about bullying.

- **Old Dover Days-** On May 5, 2012 the GACEC and GACEC Kids on the Block Program partnered with United Cerebral Palsy of Delaware to present a booth at Old Dover Days. Information on the GACEC, GACEC Kids on the Block Program, and UCP Delaware was shared with the community.
- **Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) Community Advisory Council (CAC) -** The Center for Disabilities Studies is supported with its work through the contribution of their Community Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC is composed of individuals with developmental and related disabilities; family members of individuals with developmental disabilities; representatives from disability-related training, service, and advocacy organizations; representatives from state agencies; and other disability advocates. Meetings of the CAC are held a four times a year. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss is a CAC member.
- **Governor's Cup 5K-** GACEC staff were pleased to participate in the Governor's Cup 5K on May 2, 2012. This event was sponsored by the Delaware Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and DelaWell.
- **Charter School Ad-Hoc Committee-** Following concerns that there is an inadequate representation of students with IEPs in Delaware's Charter Schools, the GACEC Charter School Ad-Hoc Committee was formed in May of 2012. Still in its formative stages, the committee looks forward to partnering with DOE to address these concerns.
- **Family SHADE (Family Support and Healthcare Alliance Delaware)-** Family SHADE is an alliance of 40+ organizations and agencies committed to working together to improve the quality of life for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) by improving access to information and services in Delaware. Family SHADE was formed in response to a needs assessment of families and service providers conducted by Delaware's Maternal Child Health Bureau. The results of the assessment indicated the need to strengthen, expand, and coordinate a system of family supports that are easily accessible, avoid duplication, use resources efficiently and prevent gaps in services to families of CYSHCN throughout Delaware. GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss and GACEC Kids on the Block Statewide Program Coordinator Sybil White regularly attend Family SHADE meetings to share and obtain information.
- **Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) -** Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) is an organization that changes lives by promoting understanding, acceptance and inclusion between people with and without intellectual disabilities. Through year-round sports training, athletic competition and related programs conducted for more than 3,500 children and adults with intellectual disabilities, the organization creates a model community that celebrates people's diverse gifts. Special Olympics Delaware builds sports skills, confidence, strength, motivation and self-esteem - not just for athletes, but for everyone involved.

GACEC Chairperson **Terri Hancharick** and her family are proud to be involved with SODE, and show their support through their annual participation in the **Lewes Polar Bear Plunge**. Terri and her crew were among the 3,685 "Bears" who helped to raise over \$650,000 for

Special Olympics Delaware. The GACEC is also proud to congratulate GACEC Office Manager **Kathie Cherry**'s son **Kurtis Cherry** on bringing home a gold medal in basketball at the March, 2012 games. Way to go, Kurtis!

GACEC Executive Director Wendy Strauss and GACEC Chairperson Terri Hancharick are pleased to be a part of SODE's Project Unify. **Special Olympics Project UNIFY** is a national project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of Project UNIFY is to activate youth around the country in an effort to develop school communities where all young people are agents of change -- fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities by utilizing the programs and initiatives of Special Olympics. Wendy and Terri are also proud to be a part of SODE's Get Into It Program. **Get Into It®** is an initiative of Special Olympics Project UNIFY®, a strategy for youth engagement and activation that is sponsored in part by the Department of Education. Get Into It® is a free, K-12 age-appropriate service-learning set of lessons and resources designed to advance students' civic knowledge and skill development, promote acceptance and understanding of people's differences and to motivate them to become advocates for and together with all people.

- **2012 Little People's Conference-** The GACEC staff was pleased to have the opportunity to work with Lizzy MacDonald, who joined us as a student intern from Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC). Lizzy attended numerous events with GACEC staff, including the 2012 LIFE Conference, the Project Hug reception and the State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs Design Team Key Informant Group Meetings. Lizzy is a self-advocate who also attended the 2012 Little People's Conference, which was held in Ocean City, Maryland on April 20-22, 2012.



The GACEC and GACEC Kids on the Block Program were proud to participate in the 2012 LIFE Conference. Left to right: Kristin Mullen, GACEC Administrative Coordinator, Lizzy MacDonald, Student Intern, Sybil White, GACEC Kids on the Block Program Statewide Coordinator and Kathie Cherry, GACEC Office Manager.

- **American Sign Language (ASL) as a Foreign Language-** GACEC staff joined Representative Quinton Johnson and Brian J. Hartman, Esq., Director of the Disabilities Law Program for a series of meetings at the University of Delaware (UD) to discuss House Bill (HB) 345. This bill allows American Sign Language (ASL) to satisfy the Delaware public schools high school foreign language requirement required by UD for admission. UD previously had excluded ASL as an acceptable option for meeting the foreign language requirement for freshman admission. However, in November 2011 the UD Faculty Senate met and resolved that the University of Delaware will now accept ASL as a foreign language when considering a student for admission.
- **Kurtis Cherry Receives 2011 Senator William V. Roth, Jr. Achievement Award-** Kurtis Cherry works every day as a Production Associate sorting and stocking wares on the sales floor at Goodwill of Delaware in Milford. Kurtis is the son of GACEC Office Manager Kathie Cherry and Caesar Rodney Special Education Teacher Kurt Cherry. He was diagnosed with Autism at age three. When Kurtis was referred to Goodwill by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation through the Early Start to Supported Employment Program in 2009, he began to



improve his communication skills and become much more independent.

On April 27, 2012, Kurtis was honored with the Roth Achievement Award. The Roth Achievement Award is named after Delaware Senator William Roth, a pioneer in advancing the rights of people with disabilities and an early advocate of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This award recognizes the Goodwill employee who has demonstrated that integrated employment promotes self-esteem and good job performance.

Kurtis Cherry proudly shows off his 2011 Senator William V. Roth, Jr. Achievement Award. Kurtis is the son of GACEC Office Manager Kathie Cherry and Caesar Rodney Special Education Teacher Kurt Cherry.

GACEC Infant and Early Childhood (IEC) Committee 2011-2012

The Infant and Early Childhood Committee set as its primary goal for 2011-2012 to invigorate its membership. During the course of the year, the committee grew from a membership of four: one administrator of early childhood services, one teacher, one early intervention advance practice nurse, and one parent to a group of eight that included two additional parents, a school district Child Find Coordinator and another early intervention representative. Additional goals for 2011-2012 were as follows:

1. Monitor, review and comment on early childhood Annual Performance Report (APR) elements, including transition, disproportionality and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
2. Increase awareness of effective programs which provide services and information for parents of individuals with special needs.
3. Advocate for adequate professional staff training and development related to the delivery of services in the Least Restricted Environments (LRE) and Natural Environments.
4. Review Infant and Early Childhood programs for inclusion of children with exceptionalities.

In order to meet its goals, the committee met with representatives from the Department of Education Special Education 619 Program and Birth to Three Early Intervention Program. The committee also met with staff from the Delaware Health and Social Services Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services and the Director of Delaware Stars Dr. Rena Hallam.

The committee met with Verna Thompson, 619 Coordinator for the DOE in January and reviewed elements from the Annual Performance Report (APR), including LRE, Child Outcomes, and Transition. They discussed the tracking form for LRE that will provide data on placement of children served in 619 and location of their special education services. Child outcome data was reviewed and discussed, with continuing training and development occurring. The data supporting transition of children at age three with services initiated by children's third birthday revealed that this element continued to be substantially met. Strategies that were used to continue to monitor progress in this area were discussed.

In February, the committee met with Rosanne Griff-Cabelli, Birth to Three Early Intervention Coordinator, to review the APR for Part C. The committee discussed services in natural environments, focusing on the small percentage of services still provided outside of families' homes and child care settings. Issues related to child outcome data were discussed. The early intervention system will be working this year to strengthen the validity and reliability of the data reported. Transition elements have been substantially met and strategies to accomplish this were discussed. The Part C Coordinator discussed the need for enhanced summer services for children and families served in early intervention.

The committee met with Dr. Rena Hallam, Director of Delaware Stars, and discussed how this quality rating and improvement system would support the inclusion of children with disabilities. The Director of Delaware Family Voices joined the committee for this meeting to discuss concerns she has heard from parents of children with disabilities seeking child care for their children. The group discussed

going in the direction of the use of subsidized child care funds to support participation of children with disabilities in child care. In the past, members of the early intervention team could make this recommendation for a child and funding was provided to help the family access the service. Presently, funding appears to no longer be available. The committee worked with the entire body of GACEC to compose a letter requesting reconsideration of this change which was sent to Lieutenant Governor Denn and Dan Rich, Chairperson of the Delaware Early Childhood Council. The receipt of this letter has initiated dialogue and concern from Lieutenant Governor Denn and Secretary of Health and Human Services Rita Landgraf.

The committee met with Mary Moor from the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health (DPBH). She reviewed the status of the use and availability of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants and the future increase of these resources based on funding from the Early Learning Challenge Grant. At each meeting of the Infant and Early Childhood committee, topics were discussed based on activities throughout the state during the proceeding month. Committee members were active in a variety of related functions and brought information and concerns to the committee for discussion. The committee also worked to stay informed on the progress in implementation of the Early Learning Challenge grant and how to advocate for inclusion as an ongoing value of all the new and enhanced work initiated as part of the grant.

Overall, the Infant and Early Childhood committee did much to meet its goals and to provide support for programs and services for Delaware's youngest children with disabilities and their families.



Wendy Strauss' grandson, Beau Alexander Strauss, was born on January 30, 2011 weighing just 2 lbs., 2 oz. Today, he is a thriving, healthy, happy 1-year-old who LOVES to eat (imagine that!).

Children and Youth (C+Y) Committee 2011-2012

The Committee identified the following year-long focus areas in support of the goals of the Council:

- Professional development needs of paraprofessionals and teacher/specialists related to the inclusion of children with disabilities in the general curriculum.
- Continuing shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) and speech-language-related service.
- Physical Education and Adapted Physical Education (APE) needs of students with disabilities.
- Needs Based Funding regulations and reporting requirements.
- Suspension and expulsion rates for students with disabilities.

Professional Development

The committee identified particular professional development needs regarding training for (1) paraeducators working with children with intensive and complex needs and (2) teachers/specialists (art, drama, music, etc.) working with children with basic, intensive and complex needs.

The DOE was asked to provide information regarding their standards for paraeducator training/professional development and to provide our committee with a synopsis of the Local Education Agency (LEA)'s professional development plans specific to our identified needs. The DOE gathered information through surveying district special education directors. Some school districts offer a variety of trainings through a Para-Pro Academy. Other districts offer one or two trainings per year. Many districts provide their paraeducators the same professional development opportunities that teachers are offered.

It appears that systematic and specific professional development opportunities may not be required or provided to paraeducators and specialists working with special education students with basic, intensive, and complex needs. Further investigation by our committee will need to occur.

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) Shortage

The multi-year shortage of SLPs in Delaware continues to be of concern. Our committee has been working closely with the Council to find a solution to this ongoing issue for the State of Delaware. Students have been negatively impacted daily by this shortage and may not be receiving their

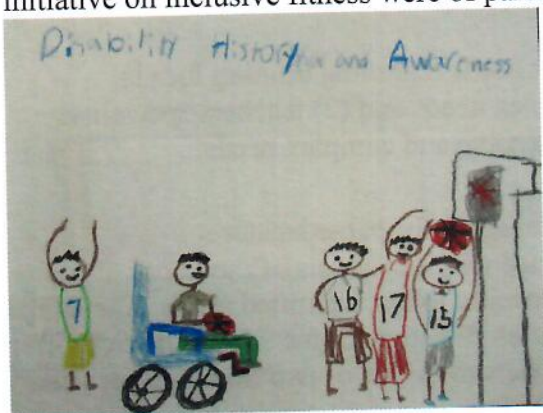
appropriate speech-language related services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As a follow-up to the recommendations of the 2008 Governor's Task Force on Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist Final Report, the committee requested a status update from Representative Valerie Longhurst, Task Force Chair. Representative Longhurst's office reported to us that she is waiting for the final report from a multi-agency work group that has been meeting throughout the year at the University of Delaware before responding to the request.

It is our hope that this report will be shared with the Council upon its completion and that the longstanding SLP issue will be addressed in a timely manner, ensuring that our children receive the services to which they are legally entitled.

Physical Education and Adapted Education Needs of Students with Disabilities

Several Committee members have been part of an ad hoc committee convened to investigate statewide concerns regarding the physical education and adapted physical education needs of students with disabilities. This initiative was prompted by the federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled *Students with Disabilities: More Information and Guidance Could Improve Opportunities in Physical Education and Athletics*, published in June 2010 and the USDOE report titled *Creating Equal Opportunities for Children and Youth with Disabilities to Participate in Physical Education and Extracurricular Athletics*, published in August 2011. Two conclusions from the federal initiative on inclusive fitness were of particular concern.



- School personnel do not always know what to provide for students with disabilities. The DOE needs to provide guidelines.
- Parents are not always aware of what they can request from schools.

The ad hoc committee has met four times to date to address a variety of related topics, such as:

- Adequacy of the preparation of pre-service physical educators and the professional development of in-service physical educators for meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities in physical education classes.
- Absence of data about how many students are currently using adapted PE services and how many need it in the state.
- The belief that the typical caseload for an adaptive physical educator is approximately 200:1, far too large to permit adequate service delivery.
- The concern that measurable goals for PE are not typically written into Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and that PE teachers are not typically invited to students' IEP meetings.
- There is currently no highly qualified teacher designation for PE or APE teachers in Delaware.

Dr. Iva Obrusnikova, a professor of adapted physical education at the University of Delaware and a member of the ad hoc committee, has conducted research on many of these issues. For the ad hoc committee, she solicited information from colleagues in Texas and Michigan about the methods by which they implemented successful APE programs in their states.

The ad hoc committee agreed that a comprehensive needs assessment survey should be developed to determine the nature and extent of the APE needs in Delaware. Dr. Obrusnikova developed a first draft of this survey. Dr. Obrusnikova and GACEC member Al Cavalier met several times, after receiving feedback from other ad hoc committee members, to revise the survey. A final version of the survey has been completed and distributed to all physical educators in the state.

Needs Based Funding Regulations and Reporting

The Children and Youth Committee supports the overall involvement of the Council in its efforts to stay informed and clarify any questions related to the DOE reporting requirements of the Needs Based Funding regulations. The DOE shared copies of the reporting forms that are being used to indicate assurance that the Intensive and Complex units earned are being used for identified students. The Children and Youth Committee reviews and comments on the uniform reporting forms and data from the DOE as it is received by the Council. The Needs Based Funding Ad Hoc Committee includes representation from our group.

Suspension and Expulsion Rates for Students with Disabilities

The Children and Youth Committee has requested that Council send a letter to DDOE requesting the final policy on implementation of Indicator Four from the Annual Performance Report (APR). We also requested that the summary data of Indicator Four by district/charter school be provided. The Children and Youth Committee plans to review and comment on the data once it has been received.

Delaware Charter School Regulations

Review of the DDOE Charter School Annual Report determined that the representation of students with disabilities in charter schools is significantly lower than in our traditional public schools. For this reason, the Charter School Ad Hoc Committee, co-chaired by Annalisa Ekbladh and Christopher McIntyre, was formed and met twice in June. The committee will continue to review and comment on the proposed regulations by examining the practices and procedures that impact students with disabilities. Written comments will be provided to Donna Johnson of the State Board of Education (SBOE) and John Carwell of the DE Department of Education (DDOE). Our committee recommended that the GACEC be included as one of the stakeholders on the (proposed) Charter School Law Taskforce.

GACEC Adult Transition Services (ATS) Committee 2011-2012

- The Adult Transition Services committee had a busy year continuing to monitor services for young adults with disabilities transitioning into adult services. Their goals and activities included the following:
- The continued goal for an increased and appropriate early transition process in all school systems was again addressed. Dale Matusevich, State Transition Coordinator with the Department of Education met with the committee to discuss transition issues in Delaware. Mr. Matusevich stated that transition is getting better but improvements still need to be made. A major area that still needs improvement is in the area of courses of studies to help students reach their goals. The group discussed ways to improve communication and information to parents. The possibility of county-wide transition fairs and transition packets to be disseminated statewide with information about the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) services was discussed. Improvement in getting information to parents by the time students are in 8th grade is essential.
- The committee remains focused on the improvement of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Barbara Riley, from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) reported to the members about traditional programs and the numbers of students that are involved with the programs. She also shared information about two new programs, Team Approach to Reaching Goals Through Education and Training (TARGET) and Project Search at Christiana Care Hospital, as well as resources available to students attending Delaware Technical Community College. The ATS committee learned more about the Employment First legislation that Delaware is working towards.



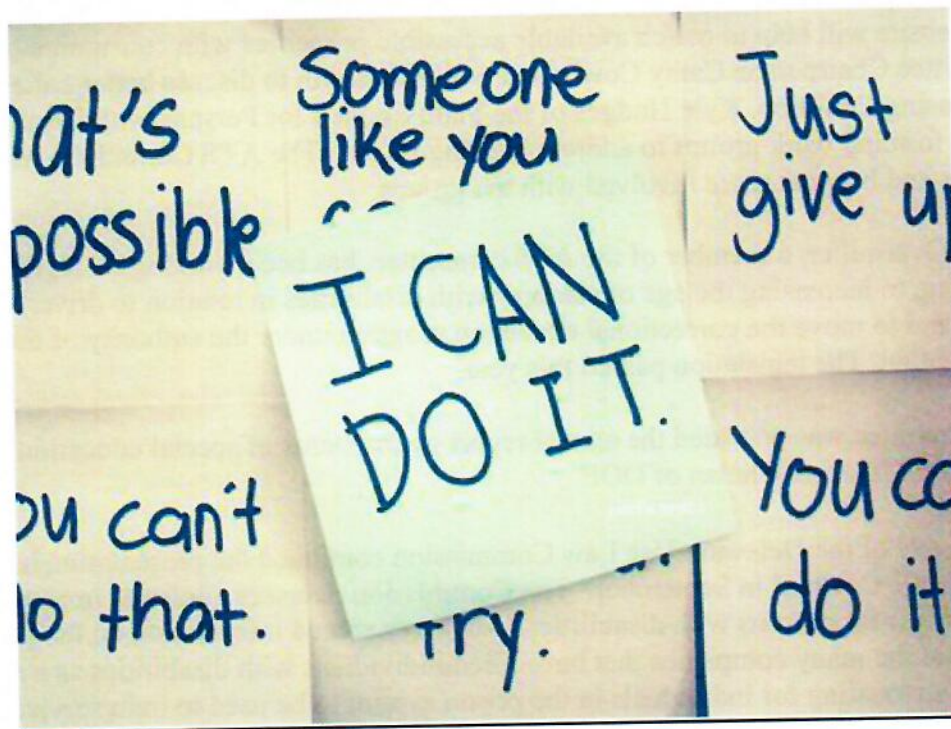
- The ATS Committee has increased its focus on transportation needs for individuals with disabilities. Bonnie Hitch from DART First State provided an update about Paratransit and upcoming improvements. There have been recent discussions on the possibility of moving Paratransit services from the Department of Transportation to Delaware Health and Social Services. This will need to be monitored. In

addition, there will probably be a future increase in Paratransit rates which the ATS Committee will also monitor. Ms. Hitch discussed the challenges of the Senior Citizens Affordable Taxi (SCAT) program. While several states have legislation that mandate taxis have available wheelchair accessible vehicles, Delaware does not. The committee is researching the legislation in other states and supporting draft legislation for Delaware. Carma Carpenter has

spoken with Senator Bethany Hall-Long and advocate Jamie Wolf. Robert Overmiller has also had conversations with legislators about accessible taxicab legislation and with the support of the committee; is helping to draft legislation for taxi companies to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles. Ms. Hitch has been encouraged to continue to keep the committee updated on any new developments. Blake Roberts will continue to represent GACEC at the Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee (EDTAC) meetings.

- Increasing affordable, safe housing with appropriate support services is another goal the ATS committee has committed to pursuing. Jeanne Zimmerman, a teacher for an 18-21 year old transitional educational program at Wesley College through the John S. Charlton School shared stories about students who are in need of such services. Ken Smith from the Delaware Housing Coalition spoke to the committee about the recently released Housing Report which focuses on the housing gaps for people with disabilities. Mr. Smith stated that actions are already being taken to address some of the housing issues facing transitioning youth. The State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) pilot program has requested an increase in funding to \$3 million. The development of an accessible rental website is tentatively scheduled for October, 2012. This website will help to match available accessible properties with consumers. ATS Committee Chairperson Cathy Cowin met with Mr. Smith to discuss better collaboration with the Housing Coalition. Kyle Hodges of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) will be forming work groups to address housing issues. The ATS Committee will continue to monitor and become more involved with the groups.
- Robert Overmiller, a member of the ATS committee, has been working on legislation pertaining to increasing the age of students with disabilities in relation to driver's education to age 21 and to move the correctional education program under the authority of the Department of Education. The legislation passed this year.
- The committee was provided the annual report on the status of special education in the prison system by Maureen Whelan of DOE.
- Roger Levy of the Delaware Use Law Commission continued the presentation he began briefly at the GACEC retreat in September. The Commission oversees contracts impacting employment for persons with disabilities. Mr. Levy shared information on the formation of the group and the many companies that have hired individuals with disabilities as a result. Mr. Levy is advocating for individuals in the prison system to be used to train service dogs. This is currently being done in other states. This seems like a worthwhile concept but the committee would like to get more information on this program before submitting a letter of support for this effort.
- The ATS Committee has developed draft goals to be finalized at the retreat in September:
 - ❖ Research and provide support for employment programs that involve students while they are still involved with school. Programs such as Project SEARCH and the Early Start to Supported Employment (ESSE) Program. ATS Committee Chairperson Cathy Cowin will be joining the Americorps Inclusion committee to help with the involvement of students.

- ❖ Continued involvement with housing issues. Monitoring of the recommendations made in the Housing Report.
- ❖ Continued support for the development of legislation in Delaware in regard to accessible taxi cabs. Continued monitoring of Paratransit services.
- ❖ Involvement with the State Transition Task Force work groups.



GACEC Policy and Law (P&L) Committee 2011-2012



The Policy and Law Committee continued to review and research proposed regulations and legislation. The committee provided commentary to the Council which was then submitted to the relevant agency or legislator. Many of the GACEC comments were taken into consideration and changes were made to the legislation or regulations based upon those comments. Examples of legislation commented on by the committee in 2011-2012 include the following:

H.S. No. 1 for H.B. No. 227 - This substitute bill requires that the selection process by which public financial assistance is allocated applications for new dwelling units shall include universal design standards. Public financial assistance includes a contract with a state agency, real estate donated by the State, State tax credits, grant assistance from State funds, State loan guarantees, federal funds administered by the State, its agency, local governments or municipalities and funding from location governments and their agencies. The substitute bill clarifies that the requirements do not apply to renovating structures or to homeowners' residences. In selecting a bid, the extent of universal design's use may form a basis to award the contract based on the best value, rather than lowest bidder. The bill sets up a 41-point scale covering the key elements of universal design, and the substitute bill allows for fractions of a point based on the degree to which the project uses a universal design feature. This was a bill that Al Rose from the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) took the lead on. GACEC and many other disabilities advocates worked with DDC for four years and were grateful that it passed this year.

Passed by the House on May 17, 2012 and the Senate on June 20, 2012, this bill is currently awaiting signature by Governor Jack Markell.

H.B. No. 319 - All persons with disabilities, including veterans with service-connected disabilities, have a right to the opportunity for competitive employment. To promote the realization of this right, this bill creates the Employment First Act. The Act requires that state agencies that provide services and support to persons with disabilities shall consider, as their first option, competitive employment in an integrated setting for persons with disabilities. The Act does not require an employer to give preference to hiring persons with disabilities.

The Act requires all state agencies to follow this policy for employment by coordinating and collaborating efforts among agencies. In addition, agencies may share data and information whenever possible across systems in order to track progress. State agencies may adopt rules and regulations to implement the Act.

This Act further establishes an Employment First Oversight Commission as part of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities. The Commission reviews measurable goals and objectives as submitted to it by each relevant state agency to ensure implementation of the Act. The Commission tracks the measurable progress of state agencies in implementing the Act. The Commission prepares an annual report as part of the annual report submitted by the State Council for Persons with Disabilities to the Governor and the General Assembly. The report details progress made toward the goals and objectives as well as strategies and policies to help realize the employment first initiative.

This bill was passed by the House on May 17, 2012 and the Senate on June 6, 2012. It is scheduled to be signed by Governor Jack Markell on July 16, 2012.

H.B. No. 202 - This Bill makes it an offense to use an accessible parking plate or placard issued to another person unless that person is also in the vehicle. The Bill aims to curb the use of accessible parking spaces by persons who do not actually need them. SCPD offered an Amendment which clarified the following: 1) drivers other than the owner of a vehicle with a special plate may transport a qualifying person with a disability; 2) a violation occurs only upon unauthorized "parking" in a defined space or zone rather than "use"; and 3) a violation would not occur if parking to pick up a qualifying person with a disability who is not yet present in the vehicle.

H.B. No. 202 was signed by the Governor on April 5, 2012

H.B. No. 365 – This bill allows parents and guardians who successfully challenge the denial of services to their children with special needs to recover the costs of expert witnesses that they needed to hire to advocate for their children. Prior to 2006, many courts held parents were entitled to recover such costs under the IDEA, but a divided U.S. Supreme Court reversed the holdings. *Arlington Cent. Sch. Dist. Bd. of Educ. v. Murphy*, 548 U.S. 291 (2006). Since that time, many families have been unable to pursue appeals for their children due to the prohibitive cost of retaining expert witnesses, resulting in many children receiving special education services that their parents and treating medical professionals believe to be inadequate. Only parents and guardians who prevailed in their appeals of service denials would be entitled to recover the costs of their experts. GACEC staff and members testified at the Senate and House education committee meetings as well as on the floor in support of this legislation.

H.B. No. 365 was passed by the House on June 7, 2012, and by the Senate on June 20, 2012.

S.B. No. 248 - This Bill is intended to provide persons with hearing loss and/or speech disabilities with telecommunications service for analog communications devices. Delaware is the only state that does not provide such service. The Bill also creates a funding mechanism for Relay Service for persons who have hearing loss and/or speech disabilities.

S.B. No. 248 was passed by the Senate on June 20, 2012, and by the House on June 30, 2012.

S.B. No. 242 - This bill is the product of research and deliberations of an interagency committee formed by the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) in 2010 to identify best practices and develop standards on seclusion and restraint for Delaware public schools. Based on national reports documenting misuse of seclusion and restraint within public schools, many

states are adopting remedial statutory or regulatory standards. This bill passed the Senate Education Committee and then an amendment was drafted to alleviate some concerns the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) had in regard to physical restraints. It was passed by the **full** Senate but was not released by the co-sponsor of the education committee.

H.B. No. 348 - The most significant feature for individuals with disabilities is the “long-overdue” removal of a restriction on voting assistance (line 40) and substitution of the federal standard. As background, effective January 1, 1984, the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 was amended to authorize voter assistance in federal elections [42 U.S.C. §1973aa-6]. Voters requiring assistance due to blindness, disability, or illiteracy may opt for such assistance from an individual of their choice who is not affiliated with their employer or union. Current Delaware law [Title 15 Del.C. §4943(a)] is more restrictive (e.g. it disallows assistance based on illiteracy and only permits another adult voter to provide accompaniment). In practice, the State Commissioner of Elections has promoted compliance with the federal law. The bill conforms the Delaware statute to the federal law.

H.B. No. 348 is scheduled to be signed by the Governor on July 5, 2011.

S.C.R. No. 34 with H.A. No. 1 - This Resolution creates a State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs (the “Task Force”) within the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) with research support from the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) and the Catalyst Center. The Task Force shall study the transitional needs of children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs and develop strategies to ensure successful transition from children and adolescent services into adult services. The Task Force shall present a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly within one year of the passage of this Resolution. The Work Groups will start meeting over the summer and the Task Force will convene in the Fall. The four Work Groups are Education, Employment, Health and Housing/Transportation.

S.C.R. 34 with H.A. 1 was passed by both the House and the Senate on June 27, 2012.

H.B. No. 311 – (*Now H.S. No. 1 for H.B. No. 311 with H.A. No. 2. The original bill was introduced on May 2, 2011. HS1 for HB 311 with H.A. 2 substituted the original bill on June 6, 2012.) This bill updates the laws under which an adult can be held involuntarily for up to 24 hours for a mental health evaluation. In place of the current system where a person is transported in handcuffs by police to a hospital emergency department, the bill allows a psychiatrist or credentialed mental health screener to evaluate a person anywhere and then transport that person to the most appropriate location for evaluation or treatment in the most appropriate and least restrictive manner. The changes in this bill will be phased in over the course of a year to ensure that the greatly expanded, community-based services are fully operational before the complete change in procedure takes place. In addition to providing people with a wider array of appropriate treatment options, these changes will free law enforcement from unnecessary transportation duties and long waits in hospital waiting rooms. This bill expands the number and kind of professional staff who are credentialed to involuntarily detain someone for a mental health evaluation. In addition to moving Delaware toward best practices in this field and protecting the civil rights of Delawareans, these changes will enable the State to attain compliance with the terms set forth in the settlement agreement *United States v. State of Delaware*, C.A. No. 11-591-LPS.

H.S. No. 1 for H.B. No. 311 with H.A. No. 2 was passed by the House on June 20, 2012, and by the Senate on June 27, 2012.

H.B. No. 245 - This legislation is similar to H.B. No. 214 enacted in 2011. That bill amended disability-related references in many civil statutes to delete pejorative language and adopt “people-first” language. This bill is intended to effect similar amendments within the criminal code.

This bill was signed by the Governor on April 19, 2012.

H.B. No. 261 with H.A. No. 1 and S.A. No. 1 – This bill’s principal effect would be to weaken protections available to individuals with disabilities from utility terminations. Under the current statute [Title 26 Del.C. §117(d)], utilities supplying gas, electric and water are prohibited from terminating services to premises if “any occupant of any dwelling unit shall be so ill that the termination of such sale or service shall adversely affect his health or recovery, which has been so certified by a signed statement from any duly licensed physician.” Such a certification delays “shut-offs” for 120 days and is renewable. In practice, GACEC is aware that Delmarva Power routinely violates the statute by disallowing signed physician certifications which are not submitted on Delmarva’s form. Neither the statute nor any PSC regulation requires the certification to be on the Delmarva form. Moreover, GACEC has been advised that Delmarva routinely disallows certifications if there are any minor or technical omissions in the form submitted by the physician. GACEC wrote a letter to the members of the 146th General Assembly opposing this bill.

This bill was passed by the House on June 30, 2012.

HB. No. 317 -This bill provides that the Department of Education establish a statewide readiness tool that will review a child’s readiness for learning when they enter kindergarten. Council supported this bill and shared observations.

This bill was signed by the Governor on June 19, 2012.

S.B. No. 207 with S.A. No. 1 -Currently, 14 Del. C. § 3122 implements requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) regarding the duty of school districts to locate, identify, and evaluate all children in need of special education and related services. The IDEA was amended to require that local school districts identify, locate, and evaluate all children who are in need of special education and related services and attending private schools at the election of their parents when the private schools being attended are located within the school district boundaries. This Act clarifies state law provisions regarding the “child find” duty in a manner consistent with current IDEA requirements. Council wrote a letter sharing observations on this bill with the members of the 146th General Assembly.

S.B. No. 207 with S.A. No. 1 was passed by the Senate on May 3, 2012, and by the House on June 27, 2012.

S B. No. 22 with S.A. No. 1 & S.A. No. 3 -This bill amends Title 18 of the Delaware code to provide insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder.

This was passed by the Senate on June 7, 2012 and by the House on June 27, 2012. It will be signed by the Governor later this summer.

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS (GACEC)

The legal authority of this Council shall be Title 14, Chapter 31, Exceptional Persons, Sub. Sec. 3111: "The Governor shall appoint an advisory council to act in an advisory capacity to the State Board of Education and other State agencies on the needs of exceptional citizens." The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance of the Council. The Council shall also serve in the capacity of the Advisory Panel as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

(a) *General.* The membership of the State advisory panel must consist of members appointed by the Governor, or any other official authorized under State law to make these appointments, that is representative of the State population and that is composed of individuals involved in, or concerned with the education of children with disabilities including:

1. Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);
2. Individuals with disabilities;
3. Teachers;
4. Representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
5. State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.);
6. Administrators of programs for children with disabilities;
7. Representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;
8. Representatives of private schools and public charter schools;
9. Not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities;
10. A Representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
11. Representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

(b) *Special Rule.* A majority of the members of the panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26).

GACEC MEMBERSHIP LIST 2011-2012

Marie-Anne Aghazadian
Nina Bunting
Jean Butler
Dafne Carnright
Carma Carpenter
Al Cavalier
Weih Steve Chang
Nancy Cordrey
Janet Cornwell
Cathy Cowin
Helene Diskau
A. Jane Donovan
Bill Doolittle
Annalisa Ekbladh
Karen Eller
Lisa Gonzon
Bernhard Greenfield
Terri A. Hancharick
Brian J. Hartman, Esq.
Dave Hosier
Julie Johnson
Danna Levy

Christopher McIntyre
Carrie Melchisky
Janet Milnamow
Beth Mineo
Janella Newman
William P. O'Neill
Robert Overmiller
Jennifer Pulcinella
Barbara Riley
Blake Roberts
JoAnn Rogers
Dennis Rubino
Ronald Russo
John Ryan
Howard Shiber
Judy Smith
Lavina Smith
Marshall Stevenson
Ray Verlinghieri
Mila Wells
Vanessa Withers-Little

Thank you GACEC members!



GACEC members and staff are involved on a recurrent basis with the following organizations and committees. These groups assist the Council with interagency collaboration and coalition building.

Department of Education, Special Education Group	Universal Design Coalition
Family SHADE	Children & Adults w/Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)
Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Part C of IDEA	SCPD Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Committee
Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC)	Collaborative Efforts to Reinforce Transition Success (CERTS)
CPAC- Child Protection Accountability Commission	Healthy Delawareans w/Disabilities
DOE Transition Council	DOE Teacher Retention and Recruitment Committee
State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD)	Delaware Ticket to Work Committee
DE & Natl. Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	Camden-Wyoming Challenger Little League
Governor's Commission on Community-Based Alternatives for Individuals with Disabilities (GCCBAID)	Speech/Language Pathologist Taskforce
ARC of Delaware	Delaware Counseling Association
Coordinating Council for Children with Disabilities (CCCCD)	Alliance for Full Participation Committee
Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC)	Abuse/Neglect Child Death Review Panel
Autism Delaware (AD, formerly known as ASD)	Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development
Protection & Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR)	Correctional Education Association
Univ. of DE Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS)	American Counseling Association
Dept. of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Committee	Natl. Assoc. for the Education of Young Children
Workforce Investment Act Advisory Board	Delaware Association of School Administrators
Governor's Commission on Employment of People w/Disabilities	Delaware Family Support Coordinating Council
Downs Syndrome Association	Respite Care Committee
DOE IEP Work Group	DE Coalition for Americans w/Disabilities Act
Hearing Loss Association of DE	Delaware Family Voices
	National and DE Chapter of Hands and Voices
	Kent Inter-Agency Council

Sussex Inter-Agency Council

Needs Based Funding Ad-Hoc Committee

Restraints and Seclusion Ad-Hoc Committee

DDC Data Analysis Ad-Hoc Committee

**GACEC Advisory Committee on the Education of
Individuals with Hearing Loss Committee**

**Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-
Committee**

LIFE Conference Design Team

**Dover Air Force Base Exceptional Families Resources
Program**

SCPD Policy and Law Committee

Transition Brochure Design Ad Hoc Committee

**Electro Convulsive Shock Therapy (ECT) Review
Group**

**Delaware Education Support System (DESS)
Advisory Council**

Statewide Transition Plan Team

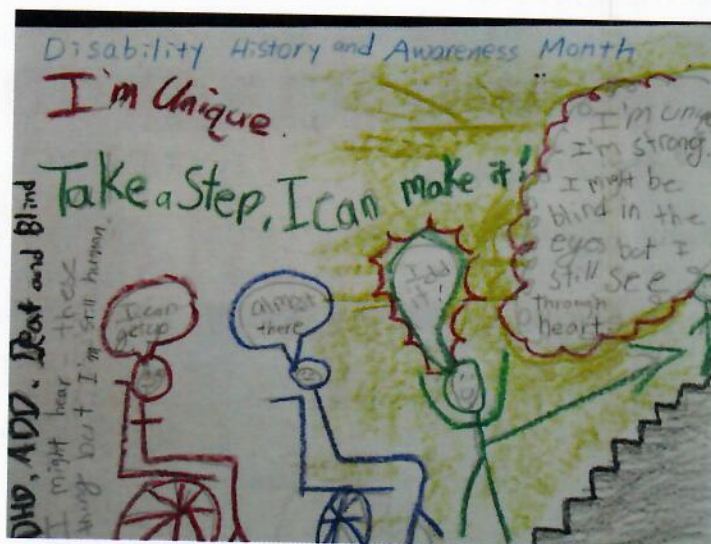
Presenters & Topics 2011-2012

The GACEC gratefully acknowledges the efforts and assistance of representatives from the Department of Education, representatives from various State of Delaware agencies and our invited guests. Council is indebted to these individuals who have been so helpful by attending our meetings to provide information, additional points of view and answer questions for our committees and Council as a whole.

- ❖ **Justin Ryan**, Facilitator for the State of Delaware, for facilitating the 2011 GACEC Annual Fall Planning Retreat *(September 2011)*
- ❖ **MaryAnn Mieczkowski**, Director of Exceptional Children Resources, DOE re: Needs Based Funding Reporting Requirements, Educational Surrogate Parent Program (ESP) and DCAS report update w/ special education scores breakout *(September 2011)*; Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Update, District Waiver Requests, DCAS Alt-1, Educator Appraisals and NCLB Waiver Support Letter *(November 2011)*; presentation and discussion on Annual Performance Report, Indicators 9 & 10 (Disproportionality) and 15-19 (Compliance Monitoring and Procedural Safeguards) *(January 2012)*; DOE Report *(October, November 2011; January, February, March, April, May, June 2012)*; and special education representation in charter schools *(May 2012)*
- ❖ **Brian Touchette**, Education Associate, DOE re: Needs Based Funding Reporting Requirements, Educational Surrogate Parent Program (ESP) DCAS report update w/ special education scores breakout *(September 2011)*; response to Policy and Law Committee DCAS questions *(November 2011)*, and IEP Plus information to full Council *(November 2011)*;
- ❖ **Sonal Cercena**, Self-Advocate re: “A Spoonful of Inspiration” *(September 2011)*
- ❖ **Ray, Lori, Jacob, Jenna and Zoe Verlinghieri**- Parent, Self and Sibling Advocates on “One Family’s Perspective” *(September 2011)*
- ❖ **Jill Ripley**, Statewide Coordinator and **Kristin Mullen**, Interim Statewide Coordinator, GACEC Kids on the Block Program performing “Super Ears” *(September 2011)*
- ❖ **Debora Hansen**, Visual and Performing Arts Gifted and Talented Program Charter School Curriculum Coordinator DOE re: Gifted and Talented Program *(October 2011)*
- ❖ **Linda Smith**, Education Associate, Unique Alternatives, DOE re: Indicator 4 *(October 2011)*
- ❖ **Sarah Celestin**, Education Associate, General Supervision/IDEA, DOE re: Indicator 4 *(October 2011)*; presentation and discussion on Annual Performance Report Indicators 9 & 10 (Disproportionality) and 15-19 (Compliance Monitoring and Procedural Safeguards) *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Carma Carpenter**, GACEC Treasurer and Director of UCP Delaware re: Disability Etiquette *(October 2011)*

- ❖ **Dale Matusevich**, Education Associate, Transition Services, DOE to Adult Transition Services re: Transition Issues *(November 2011)*
- ❖ **Annalisa Ekbladh** to full Council during 5 minute public comment period: report/Delaware takes TOP honors in Text4baby State Enrollment Contest, *(November 2011)*
- ❖ **Karen Jones**, DOE re: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) *(November 2011)*; reporting for Mary Ann Mieczkowski *(February 2012)* and Indicator 5 (Least Restrictive Environment) *(June 2012)*
- ❖ **Barbara Riley**, VR Program Specialist, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to Adult Transition Services Committee re: DVR overview, statistics, new grants and future plans *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Verna Thompson**, Education Associate, IDEA 619/ECAP, DOE to Infant/Early Childhood Committee re: Indicator 7 (Early childhood outcomes) and Indicator 12 (Transition from Part C to Part B) of the Annual Performance Report *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Dr. Allen F. (A. J.) Lathbury**, Superintendent of Sussex Vo-Tech School District re: discussion on admissions criteria, special education services and specific questions from Council *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Dr. Deborah Zych**, Superintendent of Polytech School District re: discussion on admissions criteria, special education services and specific questions from Council *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Dr. Victoria Gehrt**, Superintendent of New Castle County Vo-Tech School District re: discussion on admissions criteria, special education services and specific questions from Council *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Susan Haberstroh**, Education Associate, Regulation Review/Legislative Liaison for DOE re: ESEA Flexibility Waiver application. *(January 2012)* and ESEA Flexibility Waiver Update *(February 2012)*
- ❖ **Joanne Reihm**, Education Associate, Accountability Resources, DOE re: ESEA Flexibility Waiver application. *(January 2012)* and ESEA Flexibility Waiver Update *(February 2012)*
- ❖ **Jennifer Kline**, Education Associate, Procedural Safeguards & Monitoring, DOE re: presentation and discussion on Annual Performance Report, Indicators 9 & 10 (Disproportionality) and 15-19 (Compliance Monitoring and Procedural Safeguards) *(January 2012)*
- ❖ **Bonnie Hitch**, Customer Services Manager, Delaware Transit Corporation to Adult Transition Services Committee re: DART First State *(February 2012)*
- ❖ **Rosanne Griff-Cabelli**, DHSS Part C Coordinator, to Infant/Early Childhood Committee re: Annual Performance Report Part C Indicators *(February 2012)*
- ❖ **Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn**: opening remarks for Project Hug reception.
- ❖ **Jeanne Zimmerman**, John S. Charlton School to Adult Transition Services Committee re: Transition Partnership Program at Wesley College *(March 2012)*

- ❖ **Dr. Rena Hallam**, Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies/ Associate Director, Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood to the Infant/Early Childhood Committee re: Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood and supporting inclusion (*March 2012*)
- ❖ **Ken Smith**, Executive Director of the Delaware Housing Coalition (DHC) to Adult Transition Services Committee re: DHC annual housing report (*April 2012*)
- ❖ **Mary Moor**, Division of Prevention & Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS) (Delaware's B.E.S.T.) to Infant/Early Childhood Committee re: Race to the Top and DPBHS services (*April 2012*)
- ❖ **Kathie Herel**, Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware re: Educational Surrogate Parent Program (*April 2012*)
- ❖ **Maureen Whelan**, Director of Adult & Prison Education Resources, DOE to Adult Transition Services Committee re: Annual Prison Education Report (*May 2012*)
- ❖ **Roger Levy** to Adult Transition Services Committee re: Delaware State Use Law Commission (*May 2012*)
- ❖ **Daniel Cruce**, Deputy Secretary of Education re: special education representation in charter schools (*May 2012*)
- ❖ **John Carwell**, Education Associate, Charter School Officer, DOE re: special education representation in charter schools (*May 2012*)



GACEC STAFF

Wendy S. Strauss

Executive Director

Kathie P. Cherry

Office Manager

Kristin E. Mullen

Administrative Coordinator

your work
IS GOING TO FILL A LARGE PART OF YOUR LIFE,
AND THE ONLY WAY TO BE TRULY SATISFIED IS
TO DO WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS
great work.
AND THE ONLY WAY TO DO GREAT WORK IS TO
love what you do.
IF YOU HAVEN'T FOUND IT YET,
KEEP LOOKING, AND *don't settle.*
AS WITH ALL MATTERS OF THE HEART
you'll know when you find it.
-STEVE JOBS

